

FISCAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Measure: HB 4071 - A

80th Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2020 Regular Session
Legislative Fiscal Office

*Only Impacts on Original or Engrossed
Versions are Considered Official*

Prepared by: Haylee Morse-Miller
Reviewed by: John Terpening, Tom MacDonald, Doug Wilson, Amanda Beitel
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Measure Description:

Directs Department of Environmental Quality to purchase cyanotoxin autoanalyzer system and associated supplies and services.

Government Unit(s) Affected:

Oregon Health Authority (OHA), Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), Public Universities

Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Costs related to the measure may require budgetary action - See analysis.

Analysis:

HB 4071 - A directs the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to create positions and purchase equipment to improve water quality as it relates to harmful algal bloom.

The cyanotoxin autoanalyzer system that is to be purchased under this act must be made available to institutions of higher education for education, training, and research in times when it is not being used for analysis. Further, DEQ is directed to report to an interim committee of the Legislative Assembly related to water no later than November 30, 2020 on efforts to coordinate with state government agencies in order to respond to harmful algal blooms, and on coordination with institutions of higher education for sharing of analysis equipment.

The Legislative Fiscal Office notes that the estimated fiscal impact to the agencies do not align with the General Fund appropriations provided and does not specify if the positions included in this measure are intended to be permanent or temporary. While the measure provides one-time General Fund intended to fund positions and equipment in 2019-21, this fiscal includes the estimated costs of continuing this program into the 2021-23 biennium.

Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

DEQ is directed to purchase a cyanotoxin autoanalyzer system and to create at least one seasonal position to collect water samples and assist with cyanotoxin analysis during peak periods. The measure appropriates \$95,000 General Fund to DEQ for the cyanotoxin autoanalyzer system and \$215,000 General Fund for staffing costs in 2019-21.

The peak period for harmful algal blooms is March through October. DEQ anticipates hiring a seasonal full-time Natural Resources Specialist 1 (NRS 1, 0.33 FTE in 2019-21 and 0.50 FTE in 2021-23) and a seasonal full-time Chemist 2 (0.25 FTE in 2019-21 and 0.42 FTE in 2021-23) during these peak times. The NRS 1 position would increase the number of samples collected from waterbodies across the state, including waterbodies with high rates of recreational use during summer months. The Chemist position would increase capacity to test water samples collected during peak periods.

Personal Services costs for these positions are estimated at \$91,113 in the 2019-21 biennium and \$142,932 in 2021-23. Services and Supplies costs for these positions, including travel and equipment costs that are unique to laboratory positions are estimated at \$54,435 in 2019-21 and \$85,068 in 2021-23.

Costs related to the cyanotoxin autoanalyzer system include approximately \$30,000 to purchase the equipment and \$65,000 for operation of the system, totaling \$95,000 in the 2019-21 biennium. The full biennium costs of operating the cyanotoxin autoanalyzer system are estimated at \$140,000, based on current operation of the agency's existing autoanalyzer. Operation costs are largely related to plates that are used for testing samples, which cost upwards of \$350 each. The total estimated fiscal impact to DEQ in 2019-21 is \$240,548 General Fund, which does not match the appropriation provided in the bill.

Oregon Health Authority (OHA)

OHA is directed to create a small utility outreach coordinator position who will reach out to certain water suppliers to ensure they have the training needed to respond to water-related emergencies. This measure appropriates \$100,000 General Fund to OHA for staffing costs. The total estimated fiscal impact for the agency in 2019-21 is \$154,114 General Fund, which does not match the appropriation provided in the bill.

OHA anticipates that the small utility outreach coordinator position would be filled by a permanent, full-time Natural Resources Specialist 4 in the Drinking Water Program (0.63 FTE in 2019-21, 1.00 FTE in 2021-23). OHA estimates that this position would cost \$154,114 General Fund in 2019-21 and \$240,274 General Fund in 2021-23, including costs for Services and Supplies. These figures assume that the position is hired in April 2020, as the bill declares an emergency and takes effect upon passage.

There is no fiscal impact anticipated for the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, public universities, community colleges, or Oregon Health and Science University.

This measure has a subsequent referral to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means.